**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Candace Hillyard, Executive Director**

**PA Route 6 Alliance**

814-435-7706

info@paroute6.com

**Route 6 Alliance to Host Public Meetings on Erie and Crawford County Façade Grants**

*Erie and Crawford County businesses and nonprofits invited to meetings to learn how to apply for funds for commercial building improvements.*

GALETON, PA, January 4, 2022 — The PA Route 6 Alliance and partners Preservation Erie and Oil Region Alliance announced the award of $103,000 through Pennsylvania’s Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Keystone Communities Program that, with additional support from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), opens the door for the highly anticipated PA Route 6 Façade Program in the Great Lakes Region, a program that will distribute funds directly to commercial property owners for upgrades and improvements of commercial buildings throughout the communities of Erie and Crawford Counties.

Part of the Alliance’s mission to promote economic development and cultural conservation throughout the 11-county PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor, the program is expected to fund 20 to 30 building improvement projects with the aim of enhancing the attractiveness of the communities throughout the two-county region. Similar programs administered by the Alliance in the PA Wilds and Endless Mountains Region have resulted in approximately $675,000 being invested into over 80 commercial buildings throughout Warren, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Bradford, and Wyoming Counties.

Alliance Executive Director Candace Hillyard says, “We are incredibly grateful for the continued support from DCED and DCNR for our PA Route 6 Façade Programs. As seen in the PA Wilds and Endless Mountains, façade program funding has a cyclical effect on communities. Funds stay local; projects engage local contractors, construction companies, hardware stores, and sign shops, who employ local residents, who stimulate the local economy, and so on. This investment into the communities of Erie and Crawford Counties will far exceed the value of the initial funding and each individual project.”

Erie and Crawford County commercial building owners and businesses/nonprofits (with property owner approval) will be able to apply for up to $5,000 each toward upgrades and improvements of their building’s façade (front exterior visible from the road). Recipients will be required to invest 1:1 matching funds into the project making a maximum total project cost of no more than $10,000. Commercial buildings may be located anywhere in Erie or Crawford County, and eligible improvements include but are not limited to exterior paint, new signage, windows, and canvas awning replacement.

The Alliance invites the public to learn more about the program and application process at one of the following Public Informational Meetings:

* ***Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6PM · Conneaut Lake Borough****, Town Hall, 395 High Street, Conneaut Lake*
* ***Wednesday, Feb. 9 at 9AM · University of Pittsburgh at Titusville****, Education and Training Hub, Boomers Hall, 504 E. Main Street, Titusville*
* ***Wednesday, Feb. 9 at 6PM · Edinboro Borough Office****, Chamber Room, 124 Meadville Street, Edinboro*
* ***Thursday, Feb. 10 at 9AM · Erie Center for Arts and Technology (ECAT) Wayne****, 650 East Avenue, Erie*
* ***Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 6PM · Virtual Meeting*** *(register for webinar link)*

Register to attend a meeting at [https://paroute6.com/facade-meeting](https://paroute6.com/facade-meetingc) or by contacting Façade Program Coordinator Vanessa Billings-Seiler at facade@paroute6.com or 812-774-7082.

All applicants are required to attend a meeting as well as connect with Façade Program Coordinator Vanessa Billings-Seiler to discuss their potential project before applying. Those who cannot make a meeting can contact Billings-Seiler for program information. Billings-Seiler can be reached at facade@paroute6.com and 812-774-7082. She adds, “I am looking forward to working alongside the business owners and communities of Erie and Crawford County.”

Oil Region Alliance (ORA) Heritage Program Manager Jenn Burden states, “ORA is excited to work with PA Route 6 Alliance to bring façade grants to the region, especially in Crawford County where our Heritage Area’s overlap. We have seen the positive impact of other façade grant programs and hope to bring the same results to northwest PA.” President and CEO John Phillips continues, “Façade programs are highly visible investments that make businesses more welcoming to customers and enhance the look of communities. We want to ensure all communities within the region have the opportunity and assistance necessary to maximize this funding.”

Preservation Erie Executive Director Melinda Meyer echoes their enthusiasm, “Preservation Erie is excited to partner with the Alliance to help implement the new façade program as it will promote and support the preservation of Erie and Crawford Counties’ built environment. Revitalization of commercial corridors often begins with improvements to single buildings or storefronts. Even a simple change such as a new paint job that calls attention to a building’s original architectural details can signal positive change and stimulate similar improvements in neighboring buildings.”

For more information on the PA Route 6 Façade Program visit <https://paroute6.com/facade-program-great-lakes> or contact the PA Route 6 Alliance at info@paroute6.com or 814-435-7706.

*The PA Route 6 Alliance, a 501(c)(3) corporation, was established in 2003 to manage the PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor and to implement branding and marketing plans, community development programs and other planning efforts along the corridor. The Alliance includes representatives from all 11 counties, 9 convention and visitor bureaus, 4 heritage areas, local development districts, local business owners, Chambers of Commerce, and other interested parties along the corridor. The PA Route 6 Heritage Communities program is a program of PA Route 6 Alliance and PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor funded by the PA Heritage Area Program under the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.*

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